



Artie Mingo, President
 Norma Corliss, Rec. Secretary
 Joanne Bond, Exec. Secretary/Treas.
 Dugald Kell Jr, Newsletter Editor

Correspondence to: Joanne Bond
 174 Bond Spring Rd
 West Newfield, ME 04095

A Publication of the Maine Christmas Tree Association

February 2021, Issue #267

Greetings From Our President

Artie Mingo

Dear MCTA Members:

Hope this letter finds you healthy and safe. My name is Artie Mingo from Calais and I will be your new President for the next few years. I have been in the Christmas wreath and tree business for most of my 56 years, working along side my Dad at our company Mingo's Evergreen Products.

When I was asked to fill the VP position for the MCTA at a fall meeting that my family hosted, I accepted the position knowing too well it was going to be a struggle to give the time it would take to do my duties. Taking the President's seat would be the same.

First, you need to know I was honored to be appointed to this position. Second, I knew I would have to step down from other commitments to have the time for the Association which I have done over the last several months.

Now as your President I plan to do my best to make this association stronger than it is today and work with the fine people that have made it that way. Being new to the Association meetings, I found great interest in the different activities and issues that face the Association on a yearly basis. The enthusiasm and knowledge of the growers intrigued me to become a better grower and understanding more of the nuances of the business from a plantation growers aspect.

I think we all should be excited for the popularity of our Maine Christmas trees. We should take full advantage of where the Real Christmas Tree business is at and help fund the marketing committee's work and learn from the NCTA promotion board.

My hope is to work on initiatives and help build on the Association's different ways to gain revenue for each committee including promotional and advertising projects that will benefit all of us. The seed orchard and the Fryeburg Fair are areas I plan to spend some time on learning from the past work that has worked so well.

Thank you again for this opportunity and look forward to working with you all.

Respectfully yours,

Artie Mingo
 President



**2020 Officers & Directors
Maine Christmas Tree Association**

Officers**Arthur Mingo, President**405 Shattuck Rd, Calais, ME 04619
207-454-7411 akmingo@roadrunner.com**Ryan Liberty, Vice President**331 Sanford Rd, Wells, ME 04090
207-251-2099 ryan.liberty1967@gmail.com**Joanne Bond, Executive Secretary / Treasurer**174 Bond Spring Rd, W Newfield, ME 04095
207-793-4658 joannebond@metrocast.net**Norma Corliss, Recording Secretary**70 Hopkins Rd, Hampden, ME 04444
207-862-0065 jmc52536@gmail.com**Directors until 12/31/21****Brett Mitchell**PO BOX 226, Bass Harbor, ME 04653
207-266-1960 brett@mftreefarm.com**Donna Palmer**424 Hanson Rd, South China, ME 04358
207-877-5487 bm@benandmollystrees.com**Robert Palmer**424 Hanson Rd, South China, ME 04358
207-877-5487 bm@benandmollystrees.com**Directors until 12/31/22****Pat Ankers**20 Norway Dr, Chelsea, ME 04330
207-623-1656 ptaanp@hotmail.com**Tom McNeil**35 Silvermount St, Waterville, ME 04901
207-872-7329 tcmcneil@gwi.net**Calvin Luther**1420 River Rd, Bucksport, ME 04416
207-825-8729 calvin1420@gmail.com**Directors until 12/31/23****Lee Skillin**89 Foreside Rd, Falmouth, ME 04105
207-781-3860 leeskillinsg@outlook.com**Michael Seaman**127 Pine Tree Rd, Litchfield, ME 04350
207-268-2834 mseaman@fairpoint.net**Past President****Stephen Higgins, President**41 Reach Rd, Presque Isle, ME 04769
207-227-7425 pstephen20@hotmail.com**Director-at-Large****James Corliss**70 Hopkins Rd, Hampden, ME 04444
207-862-0065 jmc52536@gmail.com**Director Emeritus****Doug Kell, Sr.**PO Box 481, Ellsworth, ME 04605
207-664-0350 doug@kelcoindustries.com**Director-at-Large, Constitutional****Dugald Kell, Jr.**667 Morgan Bay Rd Surry, ME 04684
207-546-7989 dugald@kelcoindustries.com**SECRETARY'S CORNER**

Joanne Bond

Well Happy New Year to you all! Hopefully this year will be much better than 2020!

We are down in membership this year because a lot of us are getting older, retiring, running out of trees and want to go south, which I can't blame them! So the Association needs to encourage the younger generation into starting their own tree farms. They can involve their children and relatives while helping put their kids through college.

Right now we have 119 members and I have several folks interested in joining. It's been hard to get new members with COVID and not being able to hold real in person meetings, as these new-to-be members are eager to get their hands dirty!

Meanwhile the membership's body itself needs to pay our dues. In the newsletter you will find an MCTA application to renew your membership and pay your dues and website fees. You can also copy it off the Website or call me and I will gladly send you one. The hard copy application is very important to me as it has all your farm and contact information which I need. If you pay online, which is both easy and convenient, I do not get your full information. So it's very important when you pay online that you email or mail me your application separately.

Because this newsletter is going out later than usual so I have extended the deadline to March 31, 2021 for your membership and website applications. I would also like to take this time and "THANK" the members who have already paid for 2021.

If you have any questions or need any kind of information or help feel free to call me. Joanne Bond Home line (207-793-4658). PLEASE NOTE! I have a new email address:

bondjoanne1947@gmail.com

Thank you very much,

Joanne

Executive Secretary/Treasurer

**EAST COMMERCE
SOLUTIONS, INC** 
...credit card processing made simple

Corp. Office 22 Morris Lane East Providence, RI 02914

Gerry Lacasse
Regional Representative

712 Hurricane Hill Road
Mason, NH 03048

PH: 603-878-3484
CL: 603-440-9506

FX: 603-294-1369

Email: glacasse@eastcommercesolutions.com

Remembering Ed Chase

It is with great sadness that we mourn the loss of a long time member of MCTA. Edward (Ed) Chase, from Garfield Plantation, passed away several months ago. An obituary is not available, but this article from the website TheCounty.ME is a well written and appropriate profile of Mr. Chase. You can find this story at this web location: <https://thecounty.me/2019/10/02/living/county-faces-ed-chase-of-presque-isle/>

County Faces: Ed Chase of Presque Isle

Anthony Brino • October 2, 2019 • TheCounty.me



Ed Chase always knew he wanted to work in the forestry industry.

The 90-year-old retired Great Northern Paper Company forester grew up in Cape Elizabeth, the son of a state legislator and investment banker who might have become governor had he not died in a tragic 1953 plane crash.

“I was very sure I didn’t want to go to an office with a necktie and a white shirt on like my father did,” Chase said. “I loved recess.”

Chase spent his entire career with Great Northern, overseeing logging operations, the construction of the Portage chip plant, tree planting and more. After he retired, he and his wife

Marilyn ran a small Christmas tree farm at their home in Garfield Plantation and set up a network of cross country ski trails in their woodlands that’s still used by the Ashland School District and others.

Chase grew up enjoying cross country skiing, nurtured in part by his time at the Proctor Academy boarding school in New Hampshire.

“The headmaster liked to ski and their winter program was cross country skiing. Every one of us was expected to ski for the afternoon activity when there was snow on the ground. That’s what got me hooked on it. Sometimes, I remember the school bell ringing at half-past-seven after a snow day, and that meant no school, we were skiing.”

Chase studied forestry at the University of Maine, where he also met Marilyn, a business major originally from Connecticut. He joined Great Northern fresh out of university, living in Winterport but eyeing northern Maine.

“I told my boss, if you want me to live up there, just tell me. I ended up as woodland superintendent in Ashland.”

From Ashland, at the edge of northern Maine’s largest tracts of working forest land, Chase worked during the heyday of the paper industry.

“We had five camps for where we were cutting wood. We built a chip plant in Portage. By the time we were done,” he said, “all our production of some 200,000 cords went through the chipper plant.”

Chase also worked with Great Northern to help convince farmers and other landowners to plant trees as part of the national tree farm program.

“Any of the tree farm signs you see along the road, probably along the line I had something to do with getting that landowner interested.”

The Chases built a home in Garfield Plantation in 1967 and raised three children. Later on, they acquired more woodlands adjacent to their home.

“After we built our house, the company that owned the woods behind our house went belly up. I was able to bid against a few others to buy 300 acres. I knew the budworm was going to get into it. It was happening everywhere.”

The spruce budworm, a pest of fir and spruce trees, emerges in cycles every 30 to 60 years. The last outbreak, from the 1970s until the early 1990s, killed an estimated 20 million cords of fir and spruce trees, despite aggressive aerial insecticide spraying.

“You could hear them in the fir trees,” Chase said.

The situation led Chase to decide to harvest firs on land which is now a mixed hardwood and softwood forest and also hosts the 3.5-mile network of cross country ski trails.

“I laid out the yarding trails for the Burby boys, who cut my fir before the budworm got them,” Chase said, referring to the local logging business. “Later on I realized those yarding trails would make excellent ski trails.”

For more than a decade, the Ashland School District cross country team has been skiing there, and the Chases have also welcomed the general public to ski their land.

In retirement, Chase volunteered in running the Ashland Logging Museum, along with planting and selling Christmas trees.

“I sheared and tended Christmas trees for five years. We were selling 4,000 trees to the wholesale market and about 1,000 trees a year there in the dooryard,” he said.

Today, he lives at Leisure Gardens & Village in Presque Isle. He enjoys reading and taking in the view of the massive, multi-trunked maple that he identifies as “trembling maple.”

“It’s *Acer tremuloides*. See how the leaves are deeply rutted? It turns absolutely beautiful yellow before the leaves fall.”



GARFIELD PLANTATION, Maine -- 03/19/2016 -- At a tree farm owned by Ed and Marilyn Chase, the Ashland Area Cross Country Ski Club maintains four miles of trails, including the not-so-steep Bear Hill along the Machias River. (Anthony Brino | BDN)



Letter from MCTA's Outgoing President

Stephen Higgins

Dear MCTA members:

I have been a member of Maine Christmas Tree Association for over thirty-five years. I have served on the board of directors before I became Vice President for two years. Then I served as President for an additional two years, with my term as President ending January 1st, 2021.

As a new member just starting out in the Association, I can remember feeling inhibited in my ability to ask questions of my older and more knowledgeable colleagues in the tree business and at times it seemed as though information was less than forthcoming. But as I became more involved with the MCTA I soon saw that members were very willing to share information.

During my years as a member of the MCTA I have attended farm meetings all around the state, north to south, small to large. The field tours have provided a source of technical information as well as a chance to network with other growers and gain knowledge about such things as fertilization, planting and shearing methods, planting stock, weed control and chemical use. I have learned where to access information and find experts on subjects such as entomology, plant biology and soil analysis within the MCTA.

I have seen many programs established and expanded such as the seed orchard program and the needle retention study. The marketing committee, which was recently re-established and is chaired by our newly appointed Vice President, is going to prove to be a great addition to the MCTA. Our fall field meetings have served to supply a good source of technical information. The scholarship program has been with us for many years and serves as a valuable resource for the education of young people.

With that said, I would like to thank the MCTA members and the Board of Directors for the opportunity to be the President of the Maine Christmas Tree Association for the past two years. It has been an honor to serve the MCTA. I have learned much.

Why don't you ever see hippos hiding in trees?

Because they're really good at it!

All the Best,

Stephen Higgins

MCTA January 2021 Directors' Meeting Minutes

Norma Corliss

The January meeting of the MCTA Directors was held via ZOOM on January 20, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 6:25 PM by President Art Mingo. Norma Corliss called the roll. Attending were Art Mingo, Ryan Liberty, Joanne Bond, Jim and Norma Corliss, Tom McNeil, Calvin Luther, Lee Skillin, Mike Seaman, Stephen Higgins and Dugald Kell Jr. Not attending were Brett Mitchell, Donna Palmer, Rob Palmer, Pat Ankers and Doug Kell Sr. Guests attending were Matt Quinn and Len Price.

Moved and seconded to approve minutes of last meeting as printed in newsletter. Motion passed.

President Art spoke for a few moments about his resolve to do a good job during his term of office. New Vice

President Ryan spoke about the need for good communication between officers and members of the Board.

Executive Secretary/Treasurer Joanne Bond reported 117 members as of this date. She has already received two calls from retailers who want to order trees for this year. She announced Life Member Ed Chase passed away two months ago. The MCTA accounts are as follows: General, \$19,831.39. Meetings, \$7,586.28 Marketing, \$86.79. Seed orchard \$11,558.45. Scholarship, \$3,616.75. Website \$4,667.50. Donations \$92.00. Total \$47,439.16. Motion to accept as presented. Motion seconded and passed.

Dugald Kell said that the COVID sales guidelines worked out by NCTA were very helpful to many growers last season. NCTA will partner with North Carolina for a summer meeting in August and with Nova Scotia in 2022.

Mike Seaman advised that the Seed Orchard Committee will be having some maintenance work on the Norridgewock site this summer. He will organize a work day. The committee is trying to gain understanding why the grafts intended for the seed orchard all failed last winter.

Len Price reported on needle retention studies. Last fall he sent branches from the progeny of our best seed orchard trees to Washington State University. Dr. Gary Chastagner at WSU has been researching needle retention in Christmas Tree species for close to 40 years. Another test will be done next season. Dr. Chastagner has indicated to Len that he is very excited about the results so far and has gone as far as to say that balsam may be the tree of the future in the industry.

Matt Quinn reported on the effort to supply trees to the Blaine House last season. 14 trees, donated by members were placed around the grounds. Ryan Liberty spoke about other projects being considered by the Marketing Committee, the Fryeburg Fair being a top priority.

Jim Corliss expressed his thanks that the Fair is being recognized as a marketing tool. He is particularly concerned that we will lose our space because of non-participation by our members.

Jim also relayed to the Board the frustration experienced by Mac McCullen during the Trees for Troops project this season. Mac had difficulty getting commitments for 300 trees and yet when they loaded the trailer with the required 300 trees there were 35 or 40 left over. Apparently a few growers brought unsolicited trees, dropped them off and never told anyone! In addition, even though the trees are only supposed to be five to seven feet in height Jim saw some nine footers which hadn't even been sheared!

Art said he would like to see the budget committee activated and get MCTA back to operating with a budget. It was pointed out this should be fairly easy because seed orchard, meetings, website and scholarship generate their own operating funds and do not have to come to the general fund for support. The marketing committee requires board action for its funding. Motion was made to move \$800 to the marketing committee. Motion passed. The marketing committee was instructed to bring a budget for their 2021 activities to the Board in March.

Lee Skillin, our representative on the HRC, reported that the HRC is in "freefall", hasn't met in two years. He said we should turn our attention to the Farm Bureau.

Next meeting is set for 6:00 PM, Wednesday, March 31.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Norma Corliss

Recording Secretary

TREES FOR TROOPS

Mac McCullen

Dear MCTA Members,

I would like to thank you for your contributions to the 2020 Trees for Troops Campaign. I know that it has been a challenging year, but you all came through in spite of it. Over 300 trees from Maine Farms were delivered to Navy bases in Jacksonville and Pensacola, Florida, as well as to Gulfport, Mississippi, this season.

I would also like to personally thank Ryan Liberty and the American Legion for their support in loading the FedEx truck on November 30th.

We had more than 300 trees delivered to the farm pickup location, even though I was only tracking 300 trees that had been committed via email confirmation. I would like to apologize in advance to anyone who contributed, but is not explicitly recognized below.

In no particular order, thank you to at least the following farms and people for supporting the troops this year:

Dugald Kell	Kelco Industries	Milbridge
Lee Skillin	Skillin's Greenhouses	Falmouth
Mac McCullen	Piper Mountain Tree Farm	Newburgh
Duane LaCasce	FinestKind Tree Farm	Dover Foxcroft
Len Price	Nutkin Knoll	Newburgh
Todd Murphy	Trees to Please	Rome
Tom and Cindy McNeil	Bay Meadows Tree Farm	Lincolnton
Tammie and Rob Mulvey	Pleasant View Tree Farm	Hodgdon
Calvin Luther	Penobscot Evergreens	Bucksport
Tammy Jordan	G & S Tree Farms	Bangor
Ed Bushman	Dun Roamin' Farm	Lewiston
Lowell and Joan Freiman	Davis Stream Tree Farm	Washington
David Karas	Echo Hill Nursery	Waldoboro
Joe Young	Moose Hill Farm	Fayette
Cynthia Masalin	Sunrise Tree Farm	Lincolnton Center
Clem and Merri Meserve	Boiling Spring Tree Farm	Dayton
Gary Fisher	Fisher's Christmas Tree Farm	Belfast
Rob and Donna Palmer	Ben & Molly's Christmas Tree Farm	South China
John and Linda Archambault	Great Works Christmas Tree Farm	North Berwick
Mike and Karina Pomroy	Christmas Tree Ranch	Amherst
Matt Quinn	Quinn's Tree Farm	Cornville
Frank Zmigrodski	Oldfield Farm	Vassalboro
Heidi and Brandon Watson	Watson Farm Christmas Trees	Standish
Bob Powers	Adams Family Christmas Tree Farm	Kennebunkport

Have a Happy and Healthy 2021!!

Warm regards,

Mac

Date: December 5, 2020
 From: Brett St. George
 Email: brett.stgeorge@gmail.com

We received our tree today and are celebrating our 23rd year in the Navy. Me, my wife, and 7 children thank you for your generosity. Merry Christmas and blessings to you!



Trees for Troops
 December 8, 2020 · 🌐

We picked up 300 trees donated by Christmas tree farms in Maine last week and delivered them to 3 different Navy stations. Each tree came with a surprise gift bag of handmade ornaments donated by the women of the Maine Christmas Tree Association. What a thoughtful addition and exhibit of generosity.

One of the Navy stations told us "Yes the ornaments were received! I was curious if it was a mistake since we have never received them before but it is a welcome surprise!"

Thank you folks in Maine!



ORNAMENTS FOR TROOPS

We will be getting together in June to bag up our usual donation of 3,000 ornaments for the Trees for Troops program. If anyone has extra ornaments they do not need or want we would greatly appreciate them. We accept homemade, store bought, gently used and vintage.

Always looking for extra help, many hands make short work, if you would like to volunteer we would greatly appreciate it. We get together at Gary and Melba Fisher's home in Belmont in mid-June at 9:00AM, enjoy a potluck lunch, done by mid-afternoon and have a lot of fun.

Contact Melba Fisher 322-8716, Norma Corliss 862-0065 or Joanne Bond 793-4658 if you are interested in helping out or have ornaments to donate.

Thank you very much,
 Joanne

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Len Price

The MCTA Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the awarding of the Association's 2020 annual scholarships. These awards are for \$1,000 each and will be given to two students who come from families that own Maine Christmas tree farms. Makayla Voisine, of New Canada, and Bella Galarza, of Bass Harbor, were selected for the awards to go toward their educational expenses based on their prior school and farm involvements. Both have displayed initiative and leadership during their past educational efforts and participation in farm tasks in previous years. Through these awards the Association recognizes the benefits of students' educational efforts and hopes to encourage their continued positive involvement with the Maine Christmas trees/greens industry.

Funding for MCTA scholarships has consistently occurred for over 30 years, mainly from Fryeburg Fair tree seedling sales, plus an annual core funding from the Association. Scholarships have been awarded to 2-4 recipients annually, based on funds available and candidate qualifications. Over this time period scholarships have been awarded to candidates from all areas of the state and for expenses at all variety of educational institution--not just 4-year colleges. The Association generously contributed additional funds for the 2020 awards to make up for shortfall of annual funding from canceled Fryeburg Fair sales so MCTA could continue this important recognition and promotion awards program. Thanks to all Association members for your support and participation over past years.

Len Price, Chair

MCTA Scholarship Committee

MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

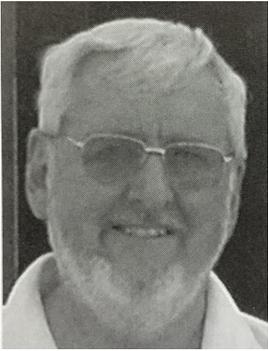
Ryan Liberty

The Marketing Committee stayed busy throughout the fall with the following initiatives:

- Direct engagement with member farms to promote their brand on Facebook: We visited with 5 southern Maine farms and took photos and interviewed the owners. We posted the photos and stories on Facebook in the weeks preceding Thanksgiving.
- The Blaine House Christmas Tree Event: We worked closely with Leslie Oster, Director of the Blaine House, to coordinate the delivery of 14 Christmas trees that were donated by the following member farms... Quinn's Tree Farm, Moose Hill Farm, Trees To Please, Nutkin Knoll Farm, Echo Hill Nursery, Tom McNeil, Skillin's Greenhouses, Pleasant View Tree Farm, Gooley's Tree Farm and Piper Mountain Tree Farm. Matt Quinn was the lead on this project. These trees were decorated by many organizations and state agencies, including the MCTA. Due to the pandemic they were displayed outside on the Blaine house grounds. It was considered a success by all and we anticipate participating again for 2021.
- Trees For Troops: We participated in the loading of the truck for Trees For Troops, and followed up with a story on the MCTA Facebook page.
- Needle Retention Program: We helped collect scion from the seed orchard and then delivered them to Len Price's farm where he added his and then shipped everything to Washington State University for the needle retention testing. We produced a video explaining our work and published it on Facebook and Youtube.
- Agriculture Council of Maine video: Matt Quinn produced a video showcasing the work that we're doing at the MCTA.

Thank you,

Ryan Liberty, Chairperson



CHEMICALLY SPEAKING...

by Steve Rosenthal

Reprinted from Christmas Trees Magazine's 2020 Spring Issue (Vol. 46 #2)
"Planting Christmas Trees A Special 2020-2021 Planting Resource Guide"

2020 is here and with the change in the calendar we face many uncertainties. As I write this article the country is in the midst of a crisis not seen before. We all have concerns for ourselves as well as our families and friends. I hope by the time you read this article that life is back to normal. (Whatever that is.)

I thought this might be a good time to look at what the future holds for our industry from a research perspective. I will add some comments to some of the items to enhance their importance.

The Christmas Tree Promotion Board has allocated money to various states to research some of the issues facing our industry. \$65,000 has been allocated to looking into possible problems and solutions. I list each one below with some comments.

1. Slugs and species – Slugs have been an increasing problem as far as populations are concerned. I believe the wet weather in the Spring has been somewhat a factor. I do not know how much damage they are doing to nursery or tree plantations. If they are a problem the next issue will be how to control them because there are very few chemicals that are labeled or effective.

2. Managing cone formation and/or reduction – Picking and removing cones is probably not a favorite pastime at any plantation. Each year I see more growers removing the unwanted cones from trees. I used to think that it was worse the year following a drought or some sort of stress. I am not sure that is true anymore. If you have any insights, I would be interested in hearing from you.

3. UAV (drones) for applying chemicals and to assist in seeing potential problems, (nutrient deficiencies, herbicide control, etc.) – The use of drones in agriculture is becoming very commonplace. Scouting

fields from the air to see potential problems is already being used. I have seen UAV's at trade shows that have small tanks on them which could be used to apply fertilizer and pesticides. The cost of a UAV has come down dramatically and most are equipped with very good cameras. If you are looking to purchase one, beware that there are FAA requirements for training, and restrictions. Please do your research before buying. I believe the potential is unlimited for this new tool.

4. Controlled release fertilizer – Corn and vegetable growers have been using these types of products for a number of years. Some of the products come in an encapsulated form that allow for a slower release than typical forms of fertilizer. The contact with soil and water helps release the nutrients over a longer period of time. Products are available in both liquid and dry formulations. Results in other agricultural areas have been mixed. I believe more research could prove beneficial to our industry.

5. Herbicide resistant weeds – Anyone that reads my articles already knows how I feel on this issue. I have been warning growers about the need to rotate chemicals to slow down this resistance, but some of it has fallen on deaf ears. Each year there are more weeds that will not be killed by herbicides. The continued use of glyphosate (Roundup), has been the biggest issue. The newest weed to join the family of resistant weeds is Waterhemp. Growers have sprayed the weed with 2-3 gallons of glyphosate and Waterhemp just sticks its' tongue out at it. I will be very interested in this research. Pay attention!

6. Reducing needle loss on cut Christmas trees – Growers and retailers alike have had to answer questions from their customers for years on this

problem. Growers can only wait so long to cut trees and still get them to the retailers on time. One of the products they are looking at are plant growth regulators. Growers of other crops have used these products for a variety of reasons including increasing set in potatoes, rapid seed germination in carrots and taller straw in small grains. Giberillic acid is one of these products being used. These products are used in very small amounts and are very cost effective. If anyone wants to play around with them let me know.

7. Phytophthora root rot and soil acidification –

Growers of fir trees know how devastating this issue can be. The old timers used to tell me that it had to do with planting in wet soils or heavier soils. I am not so sure that is true anymore. I see root rot in sandy and well drained soils. The biggest problem is that it usually shows up after the trees have been in the ground 4 – 5 years, and there is nothing that can be done to stop it. Perhaps the soil conditions may hold the answer to the problem or at least slow it down. Huge losses can result from this disease and any monies for research will be dollars well spent.

8. Genetic improvements – Growers are always on the lookout for the next magical-favorite-best tree. Consumers want the best looking tree with the fewest problems. (Remember when the Scots Pine was number 1?) New genetics have given us a number of new varieties, and also improved some of the old ones. Genetic change is a slow process but must be part of the total program for all of us to continue growing (get it?). One of the issues facing growers is once a new “super tree” is found it takes 8-10 years to grow it. Will the consumer still want it? (Kind of like going to Vegas.) Keep looking and working on this.

9. Environmental benefit of “REAL TREES” – What a novel idea! The millennial generation and beyond are all interested in reducing global warming and helping the carbon footprint left on this earth. What better time to promote the benefits of the real

tree and planting more of them. (Not just for Christmas.) The opportunity is right in front of us – GO FOR IT!!!!

There are many other research projects and many have merit. I have touched on a few of them. The opinions expressed are my own. I would like to hear from you if you agree or disagree. Hopefully, positive results will make us more profitable and be better growers.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS???

I have been getting many questions regarding chemical supplies and prices due to the virus situation around the world (as of this writing). The answer is not simple. Many of our products are made from technical formulations from China. Transportation has become a big issue with borders of countries being closed. Trade agreements can't work if we can't ship products. Basically, it is a mess at this time.

Our industry is fortunate to have products that are used in other agricultural sectors. Do I think we will have enough products? Possibly? Will there be some shortages? Maybe? Do I think prices will go up? Possibly? How much? Don't know? How is that for an answer to comfort you????

My suggestion to you is to contact your supplier to get your needs as soon as possible. Costs may be up, but your supplier is backed up against a wall with the current situation.

I hope by the time you read this we have returned to a somewhat normal life and everyone is well. I hate being out of toilet paper!!

SEE YOU IN THE NEXT ARTICLE
REMEMBER: ALWAYS READ THE LABEL!!!!

Steve Rosenthal is vice-president of TH Agricultural Chemicals, Inc. Box 265, Plainfield, WI 54966. (715) 335-6343. srosenthal@charter.net



NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION

Tim O'Connor
NCTA Executive Director

2021 National Tree and Wreath Contest

The biannual National Tree and Wreath Contest will be held August 6, 2021 in West Jefferson, North Carolina in conjunction with NCTA's board meeting and the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association Summer Meeting. Because many state associations may not have been able to hold their usual tree contests in 2020/2021, which is how tree growers can become eligible to compete in the national contest, the NCTA Executive Committee will provide guidelines for alternative methods that will be allowed for 2021. Possible methods might include a contest by video, or using previous contest winners. The Executive Committee is also working on final updates to the 2021 contest rules and will announce them as soon as they are finalized.

2020 Voice of the Industry

NCTA's seasonal spokesperson, Doug Hundley and NCTA Executive Director Tim O'Connor handled hundreds of emails and calls from media outlets and dozens from consumers in November and December. A significant amount of media stories on Christmas trees during the 2020 season were influenced by, or included quotes from NCTA.

Coronavirus was the top item of media interest in 2020. Other topics reporters were focused on included: the "shortage", prices, the environmental impact of real and artificial trees, the Christmas tree business, recycling Christmas trees, bugs in Christmas trees, mold, allergies fires, pet issues resulting from a real Christmas tree and among other odd items, the very unique topic of eating your Christmas tree. Many of the reporters who contacted NCTA were focused on presenting information negative to the industry and real Christmas trees, we were able to turn many of them around to positive stories.

We also put out a NCTA press release titled "Who Isn't Excited to Get a Real Christmas Tree This Year?" it was viewed by the media 2,795 times on PR Newswire. NCTA's messages featured in the release included; creating great family Christmas memories, the beauty, smell and tradition of a real tree, farm-grown trees' vast environmental superiority over artificial trees because they are fully biodegradable and recyclable, whereas artificial trees have 3 times the impact on climate change and sit in landfills for years when disposed, and that a new tree is planted for every tree harvested. The release also highlighted the industry's COVID-19 preparedness and that all indications were pointing to increased interest in real Christmas trees in 2020. The release also stated choosing a real Christmas tree supports farmers and that the industry would have enough trees for everyone who wants one. We received many calls and emails in response to the release and many media stories carried these messages.

NCTA appreciates the support of CTPB for the "Voice of the Industry" project. It would not be possible to handle all the media inquiries without the addition of a seasonal spokesperson. NCTA's leadership believes strongly that the "Voice of the Industry" initiative is highly beneficial to the entire Christmas tree industry. Our members, many of which pay the checkoff, consistently rank "Voice of the Industry" as one of NCTA's most important initiatives. We were able to correct misinformation and disseminate positive messages that were used in hundreds of media articles.



If undeliverable, return to:
P.O. Box 160
Milbridge, ME 04658-0160

INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS FOR CHRISTMAS TREE AND WREATH PRODUCERS



Visit
Our Website
Order Online
www.kelcomaine.com

- K102 WREATH MACHINE
- RED NET TREE PACKAGING
- BOW-MAKING MACHINE
- CAROLINA GARLAND MACHINE
- TP300 TREE PLANTER
- WREATH RINGS & WIRE
- RIBBON & DECORATIONS
- SHEARING KNIVES
& PLANTING TOOLS
- CHRISTMAS TREE STANDS

**WE ARE YOUR
COMPLETE
SUPPLIER.**

kelco

INDUSTRIES

MILBRIDGE, MAINE 04658

Call or Write for our Catalogue **800-343-4057**